



# How to Vote by Mail



# How to use this guide

This information is written in an easy to read way.

We use pictures to explain some ideas.

Some words are written in **colour**.

We explain what these words mean on [page 28](#).

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# What is voting?



**Voting** is what you do on **election day**.

**Voting** means you help to choose who represents you in **government**.

**Voting** lets you have your say.

# Do I have to vote?



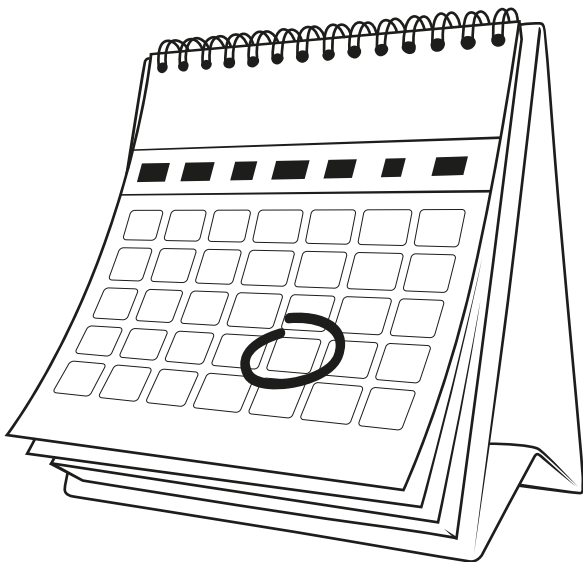
You have to **vote** if you are:

- an **Australian citizen** and
- 18 years old, or older.

Before you can **vote**, you must **enrol**.

If you want to know how to **enrol** there is another book called **How to Enrol to Vote**.

# When do I vote?



The date of the next **federal election** has not been chosen yet.

When the date is chosen, it will be shown on TV.

**Or** you can ask a friend, neighbour or family member.

**Or** you can phone us on 13 23 26 and we can tell you if the date has been chosen.

Most people **vote** on **election day**.

On **election day**, you can vote from 8 o'clock in the morning.

**Voting** closes at 6 o'clock at night.

# Where do I vote on election day?



On **election day**, you **vote** at a **polling place**.

**Polling places** are usually at a school or hall near where you live.

- After the date of **election day** has been chosen, we will put a list of **polling places** on our website [www.aec.gov.au](http://www.aec.gov.au).

**Or** you can phone us on 13 23 26 and we can help you find a **polling place**.

# What if I cannot vote on election day?



There are 2 ways you can vote before **election day**:

1. You can **vote** at a special **polling place** before **election day**.

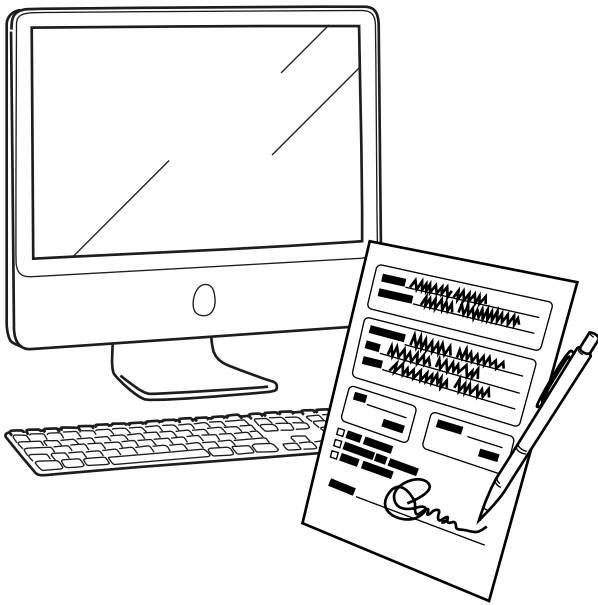
If you want to know how to **vote** at a **polling place**, there is another book called **How to Vote at a Polling Place**.

2. **Or** you can send your **vote** to us through the mail.

This is called a **postal vote**.



# How do I ask for a postal vote?



You ask for a **postal vote** by filling out a form.

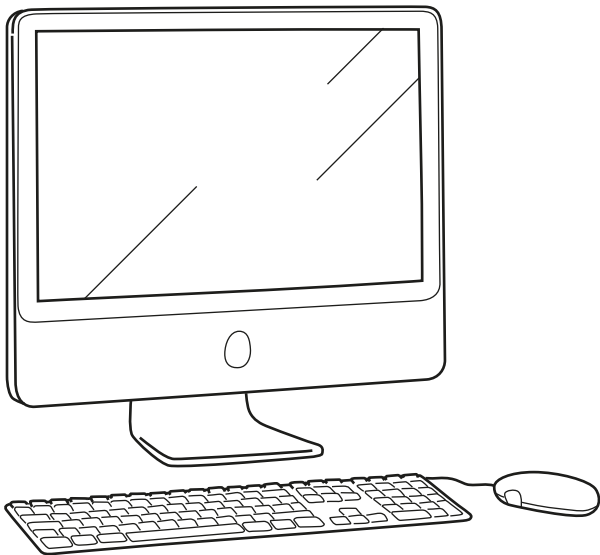
This is called a **postal vote application**.

You can choose how to fill out a **postal vote** application.

If you have a computer with the internet, you can fill out a **postal vote application** online.

**Or** if you do not have a computer you can fill out a **postal vote application** on paper.

# How do I fill in a postal vote application on a computer?



You can apply for a **postal vote** after the date for the **federal election** has been chosen.

- When an **election** is announced, go to [www.aec.gov.au/early](http://www.aec.gov.au/early)
- Follow the links to apply for a **postal vote**
- Then answer the questions in each step

One of the steps will ask you for your **enrolled address**.

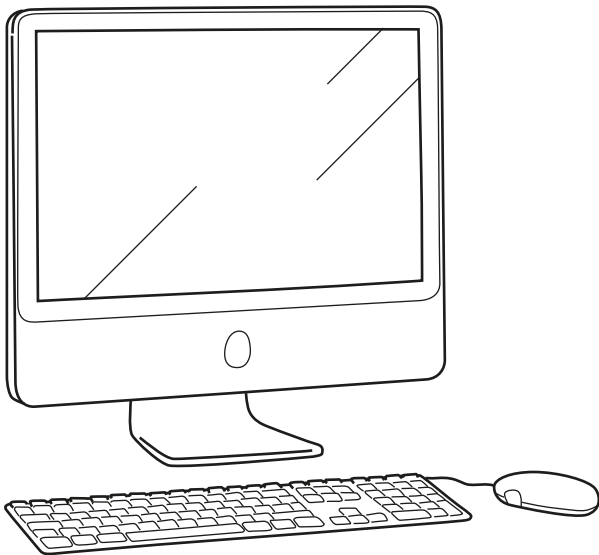
This is the address you put on your **enrolment form**. It is usually the address you live at.

If you do not remember this address, phone us on 13 23 26 and we can help you.

Another step will ask you for an address where we will send your ballot papers.

You can either:

- type the address where you live
- **Or** if you get your mail sent to a different address you can type that address
- **Or** if you will be visiting another address you can type that address. It can be in Australia or overseas.



Another step will ask you to answer a **security question**.

It is like a password.

Choose a **security question**.

Type your answer on the form.

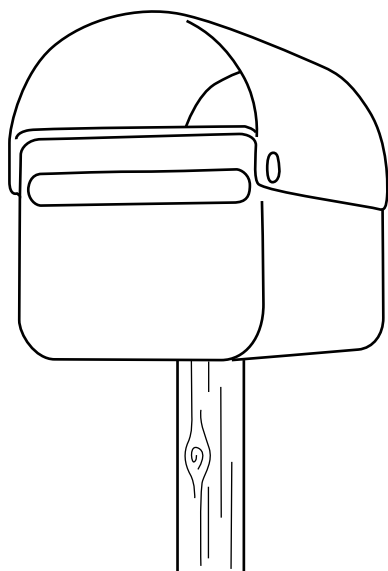
You will need to remember your answer.

If you want, you can ask someone to help you.

When you are finished, click the submit button.

When it is time for **voting**, we will send your **ballot papers** to you in the mail.

# How do I ask for a postal vote on paper?



You can get a paper **postal vote application** from:

- any Australia Post office
- **Or** any AEC office
- **Or** you can phone us on 13 23 26 and we will send you a **postal vote application** in the mail.

One of the questions on the form will ask you for your **enrolled address**.

This is the address you put on your **enrolment form**. It is usually the address you live at.

If you do not remember this address, phone us on 13 23 26 and we can help you.

The form will also ask you for an address where we will send your ballot papers.

You can either:

- write the address where you live.
- **Or** if you get your mail sent to a different address you can write that address
- **Or** if you will be visiting another address you can write that address. It can be in Australia or overseas



The form will also ask you to answer a **security question**.

It is like a password.

Choose a **security question**.

Write your answer on the form.

You will need to remember your answer.

If you want, you can ask someone to help you.

When you are finished, you need to return the form to us.

When it is time for **voting**, we will send your **ballot papers** to you in the mail.

# How do I return my paper postal vote application?



You can post it to:  
AEC  
Reply Paid 9867  
In your capital city

You do not need a stamp.



**Or** you can send it using a fax machine to:

02 6215 9999



**Or** you can take it with you and hand it in at an AEC office.

You can call us on 13 23 26 and we can help you find an AEC office

# What if I get a postal vote application from a political party?

**Political parties** are groups of people who have the same ideas.

They want to represent you in **government**.

You might get a letter in the mail from a **political party**.

The letter might have a **postal vote application** with it.

You do not have to fill out this **postal vote application**.

If you have already filled out a **postal vote application**, you do not need to do it again.

If you need a **postal vote** you can ask us to send you one instead.

**Or**, if you want, you can fill out the application from the **political party**.

If you do fill it out, you can choose where to return it.

You can send it to us.

**Or** you can send it back to the **political party**.

Sometimes, applying for a **postal vote** can be confusing.

If you want help, you can phone us on 13 23 26.



# When will I get my ballot papers?



We will post your **ballot papers** to you when **voting** begins.

They will be sent to you in the mail.

When you get your package, there will be 4 things inside.

There will be a pamphlet that tell you what to do.

There will be 2 **ballot papers**.

There will be an envelope.

Sometimes the **ballot papers** might be attached to the envelope.

This is okay, just carefully pull them apart.

Before you start to **vote**, you must first find a **witness**.

# What is a witness?

A **witness** is a person who knows you.

Like a friend, neighbour or family member.

The **witness** makes sure that someone else does not fill out your **ballot papers**.

# Who can be my witness?

Anyone who is on the list of **voters** can be a **witness**.

You could ask a friend, your neighbour or a member of your family to be your **witness**.

First you should check with them that they are on the list of **voters**.

You should ask them, “Are you on the list of **voters**?”

If they say “Yes” they can be your **witness** if they want to.

If they say “No” you will need to ask someone else to be your **witness**.

# What do I do first?

The image shows a sample of a 'POSTAL VOTE' application form. The form is titled 'POSTAL VOTE' and is for the 'KINGSFORD SMITH GELLIBRAND' electorate. It includes sections for 'ELECTION DETAILS' where the voter's name (Jennifer Elizabeth Citizen) and address (Parkview Estate, 27 Smith St, Smithville NSW 2611) are pre-filled. There are also sections for 'OFFICE USE' with checkboxes for various services, and 'AUTHORISED WITNESS TO COMPLETE' with fields for a witness's signature and date. The form also includes a declaration section and a section for the voter's signature.

Do not fill out anything yet.

First you must show your **ballot papers** to the **witness**.

Then you must also show your envelope to the **witness**.

The envelope will have your name and address on it.

It will also ask for your **security question**.

You should write the same answer that you put on your **postal vote application**.

Then you need to sign your name or make your mark on the envelope.

If you need help, you can ask your **witness** to help you.

When you are finished, your **witness** will also sign the envelope.

They will also write the date.

Now your **witness** is finished and you can **vote**.

# How do I mark my green ballot paper?

Sample ballot paper only

The green **ballot paper** is for the **House of Representatives**.

The names on the green **ballot paper** are **candidates**.

Next to each **candidate** name is an empty box.

Pick the **candidate** who is your first choice.

Write 1 in the empty box next to their name.

Then pick the **candidate** who is your second choice.

Write 2 in the empty box next to their name.

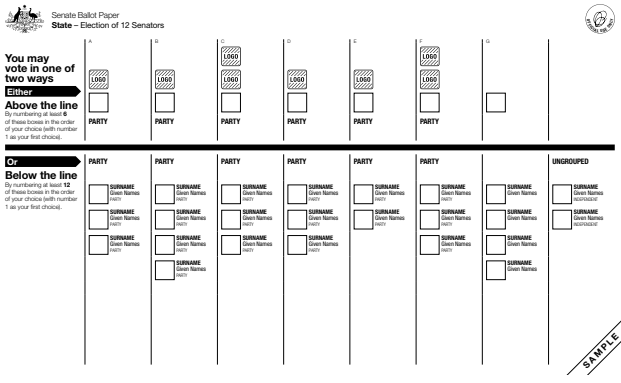
Keep going until all the empty boxes have a different number.

When all the empty boxes have a different number, you are finished filling out the green **ballot paper**.

Some **candidates** might have another box next to their name with a word or picture in it.

The picture might help you decide who to **vote** for.

# How do I mark my white ballot paper?



Sample ballot paper only

The white **ballot paper** is for the **Senate**.

It has a black line on it.

Above the black line is a list of **political parties**.

Below the black line are the names of all the **candidates**.

There are 2 different ways to mark your white **ballot paper**.

You must choose 1 way:

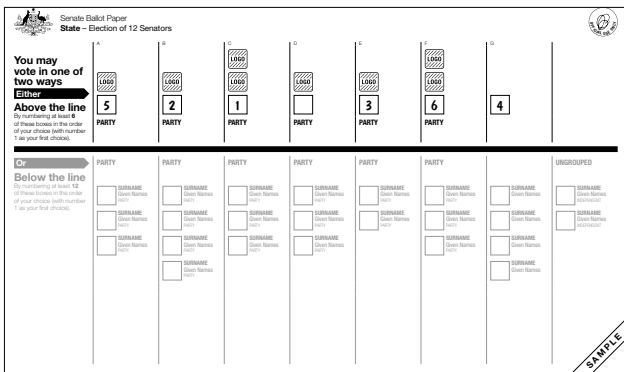
1. If you want to **vote** for a **political party** or group you can **vote** above the black line on the **ballot paper**.

**Or**

2. If you want to **vote** for **candidates**, you can **vote** below the black line on the **ballot paper**.

You only choose 1 way.

# To vote above the black line...



Sample ballot paper only

Above the name of each **political party** is an empty box.

Pick the **political party** or group you want to **vote** for.

Write 1 in the empty box of the group that is your first choice.

Then pick the group who is your second choice.

Write 2 in the empty box next to their name.

Keep going until 6 empty boxes have a number.

If there are less than 6 empty boxes, you must number all of them.

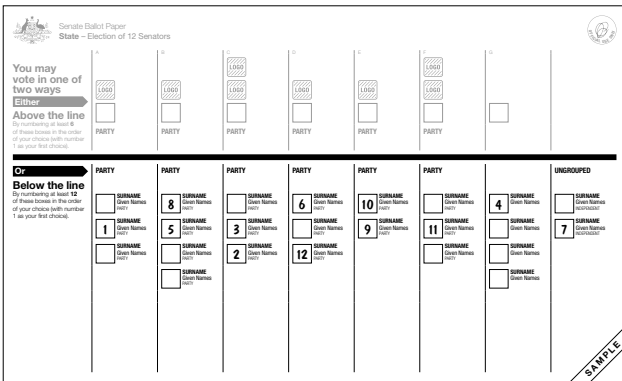
You can finish **voting** now.

Or you can keep going until all the empty boxes have a different number.

Some **political parties** might have another box above to their name with a word or picture in it.

The picture might help you decide who to **vote** for.

# To vote below the black line...



Sample ballot paper only

Next to each **candidate** name is an empty box.

Pick the **candidate** who is your first choice.

Write 1 in the empty box next to the **candidate** who is your first choice.

Then pick the **candidate** who is your second choice.

Write 2 in the empty box next to their name.

Keep going until 12 empty boxes have a number.

If there are less than 12 empty boxes, you must number all of them.

You can finish **voting** now.

**Or** you can keep going until all the empty boxes have a different number.



# Where do I put my ballot papers?



When you have finished **voting**, put your **ballot papers** into the envelope.

Close the envelope.

You can use some sticky tape if you like.

Then take the envelope and put it into a post box. You should do this soon after you have finished **voting** so that the envelope can get to us in the mail quickly.

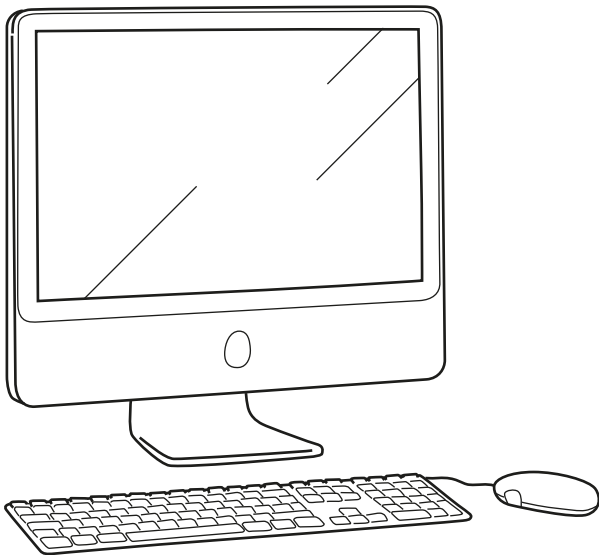
You do not need a stamp.

You can ask a friend if you need help.

Now you have finished **voting**.

If you have any questions you can phone us on 13 23 26.

# Can I practise voting?



Yes.

You can practise **voting** on the internet.

Go to

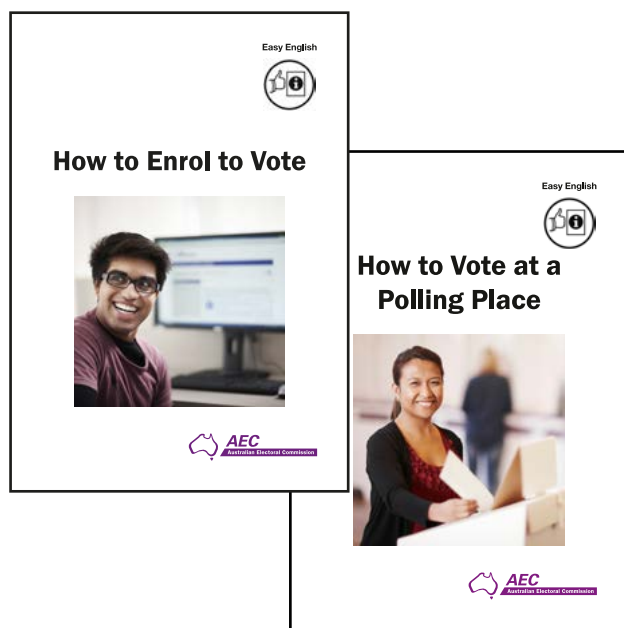
[www.aec.gov.au/practice](http://www.aec.gov.au/practice).

Remember, this is just a practice **vote**.

You will still need to **vote** in the **election**

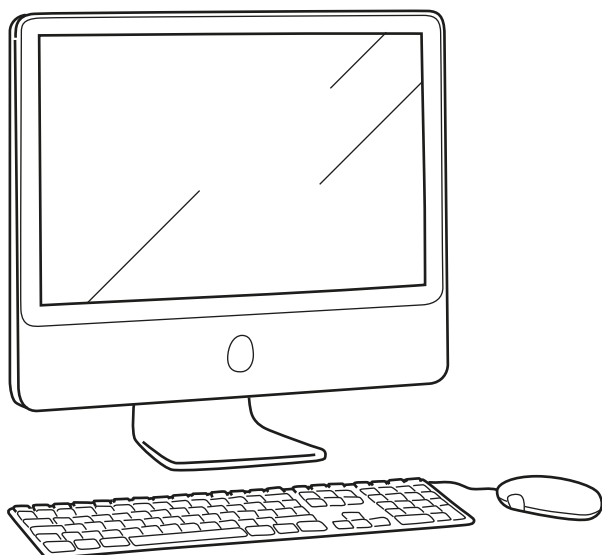
- at a **polling place**
- **Or** by mail.

# How can I get more information?



If you want to know how to **vote** by mail there is another book called **How to Vote at a Polling Place**.

If you want to know how to **enrol** to **vote** there is another book called **How to Enrol to Vote**.



If you have a computer with the internet, you can look at these books on our website [www.aec.gov.au/easy-english](http://www.aec.gov.au/easy-english).

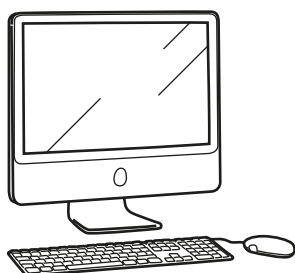
There is also information in other languages on our website.

# What do these words mean?

Word	Meaning
<b>Australian citizen</b>	A person born in Australia. <b>Or</b> a person who was born overseas and has become an <b>Australian citizen</b> .
<b>Ballot papers</b>	The paper where you mark your <b>vote</b> .
<b>Candidate or candidates</b>	The people who want to represent you in <b>government</b> .
<b>Enrol</b>	Put your name on the list of people who can <b>vote</b> .
<b>Enrolled address</b>	The address you put on your <b>enrolment form</b> .
<b>Enrolment form</b>	The form you fill out before you can <b>vote</b> . This puts your name on the list of people who can <b>vote</b> .
<b>Election day</b>	The day that most people <b>vote</b> .
<b>Government</b>	A group of people who represent the people of Australia. The government makes the law.
<b>House of Representatives</b>	The group of people in government who represent each local area.
<b>Political party</b>	A group of people who have the same ideas.
<b>Polling place</b>	The place where most people <b>vote</b> . Sometimes you can <b>vote</b> at a <b>polling place</b> before <b>election day</b> . These are called early voting centres.

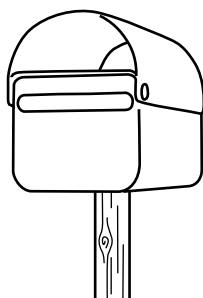
Word	Meaning
<b>Postal vote</b>	The way you <b>vote</b> by mail if you cannot get to a <b>polling place</b> .
<b>Postal vote application</b>	The form you fill out to apply for a <b>postal vote</b> to be sent in the mail.
<b>Security question</b>	Is like a password on your <b>postal vote application</b> .
<b>Senate</b>	The group of people in <b>government</b> who represent each state and territory.
<b>Vote or voting</b>	How you choose who represents you in <b>government</b> .
<b>Voters</b>	All the people who <b>vote</b> in the election.
<b>Witness</b>	A friend, neighbour or member of your family who makes sure that someone else does not fill out your <b>ballot papers</b> .

# How can I get help?



**Website:** [www.aec.gov.au](http://www.aec.gov.au)

Or [www.aec.gov.au/enquiry](http://www.aec.gov.au/enquiry)



**Postal address:**

AEC  
Reply Paid 9867  
In your capital city



**Phone:**

- 13 23 26
- 0011 61 2 6160 2600  
(from outside Australia)



**National Relay Service:**

- TTY users phone 133 677 and ask for 13 23 26
- Speak and Listen users phone 1300 555 727  
and ask for 13 23 26
- Internet relay users connect to the NRS and ask for 13 23 26

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